

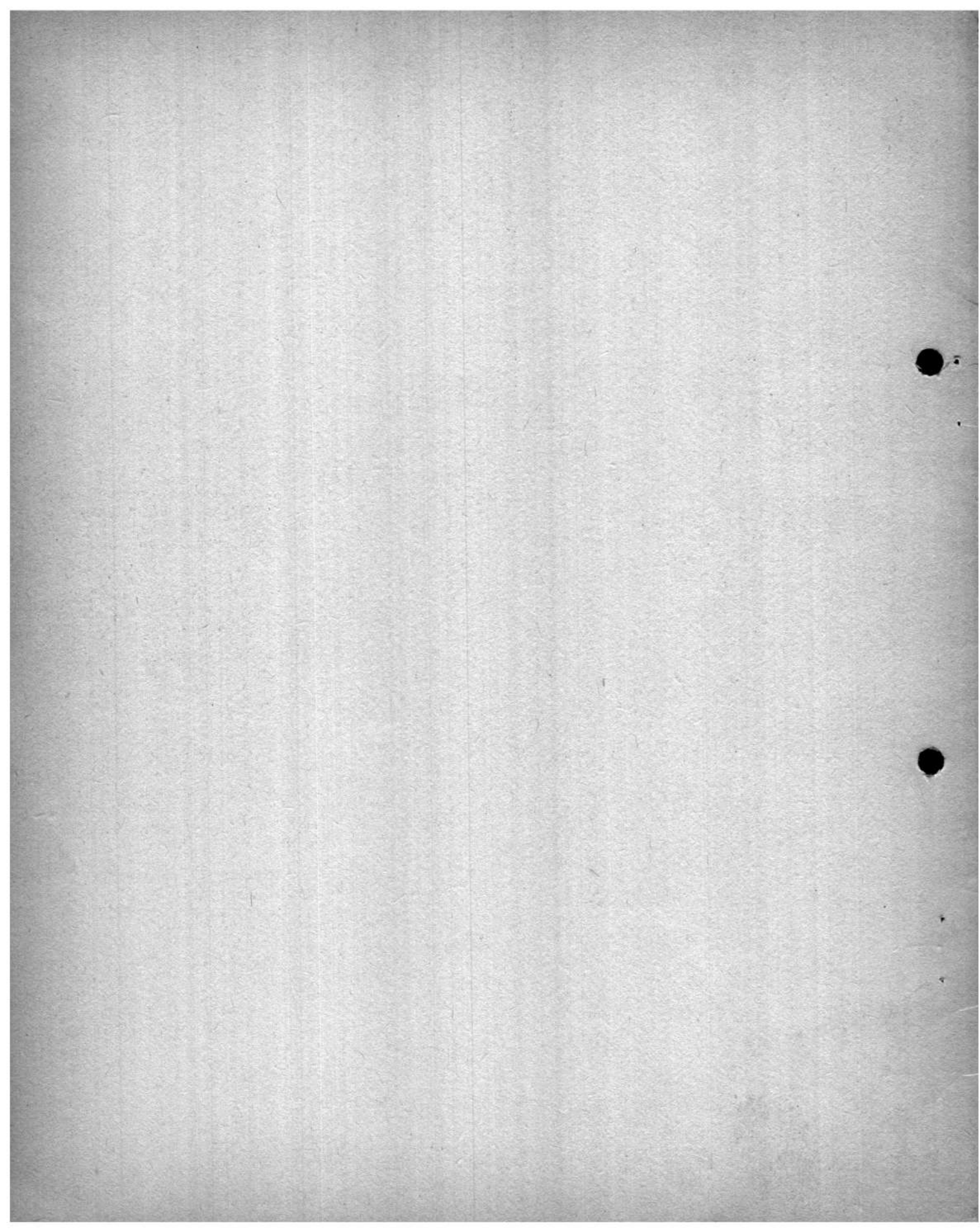
FIELD TRAILS

Nov. 1939

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MAYORS'

FUND



VELD TRAILS

(The Official Organ of Transvaal Rovers)

Vol. 11.

November 1939.

No. 11.

Veld Trails is published on the fifth of every month. Contributions should reach the Editor at P.O. Box 631, Johannesburg before the 20th of the month previous to publication.

EDITORIAL LICENSE.

These are indeed troublous times and people cannot be blamed for being fidgety and restless. National service signifies more today than it did a few months back when one's thoughts were with the crack of willow and splash of cool water.

Everyone has to a greater or lesser extent been affected by the unavoidable trend of things and repercussions have been felt. Military duties have necessitated many Rovers staying away from their crew meetings or from carrying on their work as Scouters, and although we can ill spare them we would say to them that they, in common with the rest of South African youth, have this duty of Service to perform, and knowing them as Rovers, know they will not fail us or the country.

Our Editor, Claude Cook, is one of those who have volunteered for military service. He is therefore, unable to carry on his duties to his satisfaction, and has found it necessary to hand over, very reluctantly his reins of office to me for the duration of his service with the "Heavies". I take over not without some misgivings, for the magazine has, under his direction, become a vital link in Transvaal Rovering, particularly on the Rand. However as Malvolio would say some are born to greatness, some achieve greatness, some have greatness thrust upon them. Meantime I would, on behalf of Transvaal Rovering, like to give Claude 'a good hand' for his splendid work.

Another stalwart who ranks amongst the lists of the 'retired' is our old friend Van - business manager, treasurer and general factotum to Veld Trails since its inception two years ago. Pressure of business and scouting work makes it necessary for him also to hand over. John Greenhorn, of the Benoni Crew has filled this vacancy (at the same remuneration) and already finds the job is not so sugary as it looked. Many thanks, Van, for all your help and valuable work which has done so much to make Veld Trails what it is today.

With this copy of Veld Trails you will receive an enrolment form for 1940. The price of the magazine has been increased to 3/6 per annum to cover the increased costs. Get your crews to subscribe - every Rover should have a copy and become acquainted with what is being done for Rovering in this province - Will you help?

Before closing I should like to draw your attention once more to the Transvaal Rover Indaba to be held at Van Ryn Estates on 18/19th November. Do your very best to support this gathering. Remember that the last Indaba at Bronkhorstspuit resulted in the Transvaal Rover Scout Committee, Veld Trails, the National Service Register, and much better work and co-operation amongst Rover Crews than had been known for some long time.

Yours sincerely,

A.I. ROBERTSON.

INDABA NEWS

The 4th Benoni Crew have undertaken the very useful work of running a canteen at the Indaba.

The objects of the canteen will be:

1. To sell cigarettes, minerals and chocolates
2. To take orders for milk on Saturday and Sunday.
3. To take orders for fresh or cooked meal for Saturday and Sunday.

Orders for items 2 and 3 should be sent to H.E. Linton, 14 Second Avenue, Benoni (Phone 824) up to midnight on Friday, 17th. Money must accompany orders.

The attention of readers is drawn to the following notices:-

SCOUTER'S LUNCH CLUB:

26th October	---	Debate. "Scouting in South Africa is a Failure" For : E. Hobbs. Against: A. Nimmo.
2nd November	---	Address by Ian Fraser. "Climbing in the Cairngorm Mountains".
9th November	---	Talk by A. Nimmo. "Queries".
16th November	---	Reply to the above - Ken Fleischer
23rd November	---	Talk by 'Pop' Bolton "Across the Herring Pond"
30th November	---	Talk by M. van Biene.

The Chairman of the Lunch Club invites all Rovers and Scouters who may be in Johannesburg on these dates to attend.

The Treasurer wishes to acknowledge with thanks the following donations to Veld Trails:

St. John's Crew	-	£1. 1. 9
St. Patrick's Crew		7. 6

Have you enrolled as a member of the Rand Blood Transfusion Service. Do so at once - the need for donors is great.

The writer of this letter is a Rover Scout in Camberwell, London, and is at present doing his bit in a First Aid Station "Somewhere on the Home Front."

FROM THE HOME FRONT

2nd September, 1939.

So we are now at war with Germany, and the little housepainter is to have his bloodbath. I must confess that I never shared the enthusiasm of those who, up to about a week ago, declared there would be no war. It seemed plain that even if Hitler was bluffing, the bluff would have to be called and he would have to take a gambler's last chance.

I date the crisis proper from the day the Soviet-German Pact was announced. The newspapers are very slow to chide Russia. There are, of course, guarded remarks such as "the many friends of Russia will be very disappointed ---" etc., but nothing vigorous. A high prelate did, from his pulpit, accuse Stalin of acting the Judas, but G.B. Shaw asked "who, then, is the Christ?"

I propose to mention some aspects of the present situation and only hope the censor does not cast a suspicious eye on them, but after all, these notes don't contain information you won't find in newspapers.

EVACUATION OF SCHOOL CHILDREN:

As you are probably aware thousands of school children have been sent to places of comparative safety. Most of them are far too young to understand the significance of this event and think, I suspect, they are indebted to Hitler for a holiday in the country. With their small bundles of clothes, gas-masks in cartons slung from their shoulders, sucking toffee and ice cream, they filled the buses and so started on a journey which would land them in safe and happy country homes. With their going London seldom hears laughter and shouting and is like a city desolated.

WINDOWS: Many people and most shops are safeguarding their windows from being shattered by sticking gummed paper on them. The favourite design is strips of paper formed like a Union Jack. Some artistic souls use coloured paper instead of plain brown. Others again stick on the papers to form letters such as:
BUSINESS AS USUAL.

SANDBAGGED LONDON:

Sandbags everywhere - mountains of them on public and commercial buildings, and miniature fortifications on private buildings. Firms have been advertising sandbags filled and delivered in London for 84/- per hundred. I don't know whether this includes laying and stacking them. Thousands of bags are used as you can imagine. One firm of wholesale drapers has used pillow cases for sandbags... a bookshop nearby has piled stocks of old and second-hand books outside its premises. A good tale is told of workmen filling up bags, not with sand, but with any old building rubble, stones etc. Every time a half-brick went in, someone said "and that's another one for old 'Itler." Yes, London is today a city of sandbags.

BLACK OUT

Gone are the gay Neon lights, the brightly lit shops and glittering trains and buses: the once well-lit streets are now as black as country lanes, and overhead the stars gleam in a way never seen in London before. The chief constellations of our Northern hemisphere - the Plough, Cassiopea and mighty Orion look down on darkened city - a city of dreadful night - whilst countless steel cables stretch up to the heavens in wakeful watch of enemy aircraft.

Only a few faint gleams of light show - and on very rare occasions. Motor vehicles glide along with very much masked lights. Accidents are not uncommon thus giving rise to a hint that the black-out is too black. What will it be like when the winter months draw on?

GENERAL

There is a terrific run on electric torches and rolls of gummed paper. At the moment everything seems normal in many ways - plenty of food, no alarm, no 'patriotic' demonstrations - perfect calm. Plenty of recruits for most services, newspapers - with leading articles in majestic prose - as usual - weather, a perfect summer day - rather warm but with much of the sultriness taken out of it by a storm last night - tonight, a half-moon shining brightly, stars gleaming down magnificently - Britain is at war.

W. A. BAGLEY.

ROYCROFT ROVER CREW.

This Crew which has recently been established in Pretoria is something new in Rovering.

The very idea underlying it makes it impossible for the Crew to be attached to any particular Group, until such time as every Group in the District has its own Rover Crew.

The Crew has been formed to serve those groups which have no Rover Crew at present.

The policy of Roycroft is that members are not to lose their identity with their own groups but, eventually, when members of the same Group feel they are established in Rovering, and their numbers warrant it, they are to break away and form a Crew of their own and so complete the Group system.

In the beginning it was suggested that members should wear their own group uniform and scarf. However the Crew decided to have their own uniform and distinctive colours.

Roycroft Crew functions as a normal Crew with the difference that their finance is managed by themselves and when running expenses have been deducted any balance is credited to the various Groups proportionately according to their representation.

Such money is to be devoted by the Groups to the formation of their own Crews. A den is in the course of preparation.

The Congregational church has given the Crew the use of a room in an outbuilding and a large loft.

These are slowly being converted and will be made into a really first class scouty den.

The layout will include a garden. Flower pockets and beds have already been put down.

It is the intention to provide a workshop and the usual Rovers retreat. The present membership is seven drawn from four groups.

The meeting night is Sunday and the Crew meets at 8.45 i.e. after all church services are over.

Scribe J. Palmer,
16 Loop Street,
PRETORIA.

A clever man tells a woman he understands her; a stupid one tries to prove it.

"Can I lead a good Christian life in Johannesburg on £4 a week?" a young man once asked the padre.

"My boy," was the reply, "that's all you can do."

1939

When you get what you want in your struggle for self,
And the world makes you King for a day,
Then go to the mirror and look at yourself,
And see what that guy has to say.

For it isn't your Father or Mother or Wife,
Whose judgement upon you must pass;
The feller whose verdict counts most in your life,
Is the guy staring back from the glass.

He's the feller to please, never mind all the rest,
For He's with you clear up to the end,
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test,
If the guy in the glass is your friend.

You may, like Jack Horner, "chisel a plum",
And think you're a wonderful guy,
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum,
If you can't look him straight in the eye.

You can fool the whole world down the pathway of years,
And get pats on the back as you pass,
But your final reward will be heartache and tears,
If you've cheated the guy in the glass.

HUMOUR IS A RARE GIFT

Have you ever made up a list of the things that make you laugh? It's a very good test of character.

Do you laugh when you see anyone slip on a banana skin or sit on a newly-painted bench. Most people do. The reason may be a feeling of relief that it isn't yourself who is running the risk of looking a fool or being hurt, or it may be a feeling of relief that the victim isn't hurt much.

Laughter is a thing to be rather careful about. Very often it is the mark of a weak-minded person who wants to go the way of the majority. It is worth remembering that crowds are like a lot of sheep and are nearly always wrong. A mob is more inclined to sneer at beauty and like what is ugly than any single member of the crowd would if he were alone. That is why it is good for us to be alone sometimes. When you laugh alone it's usually from the pure happiness of being alive. But the best and only laughter is that which is aroused by the sight of people very like ourselves making fools of them-

selves - so like ourselves that we begin to wonder and say with humility "There, but for the grace of God, go I".

Humour has been defined by one writer as "laughter in the midst of tears," another says "humour is an atmosphere". Wit, a vastly thing from humour is defined as a flash. Anyone can be witty but humour is a rare gift - that is why so many of the best humorists are Scotsmen. Humour, like Dame Fashion, is capricious and what was funny in one age isn't necessarily at all funny in another. For instance, nowadays it is considered a low form of humour to make puns but men were once accepted as wits if they indulged in this play on words. Poor struggling Tom Hood - King of all punsters - said of himself that he had to be a lively Hood to make a livelihood. Lewis Carroll - another of Alice in Wonderland - maths. master, Christ Church Oxford and minister, was another King of Nonsense.

Charles Lamb once consulted a doctor who recommended him to take a walk on an empty stomach. "Whose?" inquired Lamb. Then there is Lamb's reply to the reproach of his India House superior, "You always come late to office." "Yes" said Lamb, "but see how early I leave." "She was a good cook as cooks go," wrote "Saki", "and as good cooks go she went." Another punster was Shakespeare who once said: "It makes my choleric rise to wear a collar that keeps rising up round my neck." That may have been very amusing in his time, 1600, but it isn't the least amusing in 1939 except in music-halls and on the films where their idea of what is amusing is just 339 years behind the times.

But there is another sort of humour - humour that lasts, and that is to be found in Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" written 589 years ago and still going strong. After Chaucer's death in 1400 Britain had no humour for nearly 200 years. The Black Death and the continual Wars at this time didn't provide food for laughter, and when humour came back it was on the stage, produced and edited by W. Shakespeare Ltd. Read a Midsummer Nights' Dream, 12th Night - laugh with Falstaff the Clown in Henry 4th and dance with Merry Andrew in "What you Will". There's humour for you. After Shakespeare humour again fell into a decline. During this time the Puritans who had many good points, didn't laugh much or allow others to do so. Then along came Samuel Pepys and his diary whose humorous remarks still make people laugh today.

The great age of humour was the 18th Century. It began with the delightful essays of Addison and Steele in the Spectator. Jonathan Swift carried on the good work with Gullivers Travels, helped the Beggars Opera by Gay (an appropriate name) and the plays of Sheridan and Goldsmith. Jane Austen now appears on the scene. But most humorous of all British novelists is Charles Dickens and one need not go further than David Copperfield to prove this fact. Recall to mind that most gorgeous of all comic creatures Mr. Micawber, always waiting for something to turn up, one whose language gets more and more inflated only to burst like a pricked bladder just at the most impressive moment.

There is humour in the poets too. Burns of Scotland - Byron of England, Goldsmith of Ireland and our own Flemming. Nor does humour show any sign of dying. In the plays of G.B. Shaw, W.S. Gilbert, A.P. Herbert and the late John Galsworthy can be found much to laugh at. Read the novels of W.W. Jacobs, P.G. Wodehouse, Jerome K. Jerome Three men in a Boat. A.A. Milne and G.K. Chestertons Works and I warrant you'll not be disappointed.

A.I.R.

"Cobber, it's up to me and you,.....
To see that half his dreams come true....."

The dreams and ideals of many men and women are today lying in the dust, broken and shattered - dreams of peace and safety and all happiness that goes with peace. Today the Second Great War has already caused grief and suffering, days of anxiety and dread of what the morrow might bring. It all makes things seem hopeless and useless as if this striving for Peace was an empty ideal.

What then of the Scout and Rover Movement? Brotherhood and peace, fellowship and friendship, where Scout meets Scout on the basis of international goodwill and the ten Scout Laws, and Rover meets Rover in the carrying out of a man's part in the great Scout creed.

This war will be, amongst other things, a testing time for the Rover section. It is now that we must unite and work together for the good of all. There are many services open to us now. Apart from the essential service of defence there are other ways of help and assistance necessary.

Rumours fly around these days that startle and unsettle people. Disputes, involving racialistic and political feelings are numerous, unrest and insecurity follow closely in their wake and unless these things be put down they are apt to cause serious trouble. Help then to subdue them, do not lend an ear to every tale that comes from the street, the workshop or the office. Don't run down the men at the head of affairs. Most of you helped to put them where they are - don't blame them if you think they are wrong.

At no time in the existence of Rovering has unity been so necessary. We must carry on - slowly and quietly - but always with the idea at the back of our minds that there will come a time when "Honour shall come back like a King to the earth, and pay his subjects with a royal wage."

Carry on!

ONLOOKER

ROVERS AND THE A.C.F.

With regard to the scheme for parties of Rovers to volunteer for service in A.C.F. units, as published in the last issue, meetings were held at Johannesburg, East Rand and Pretoria.

As a result of those meetings (Johannesburg, 1 volunteer, East Rand 4, Pretoria) it has been decided not to proceed with the scheme.

Dear Editor,

Just to refute rumours that I've permanently disappeared from the face of Rovering I thought I'd drop you a line to give you the lowdown on those Port Elizabeth Central Crew Rovers we've all heard so much about. My first surprise on entering the Den was to find that everyone present had heard of Parkview Crew and just for a moment my chest swelled with pride to such an extent that it threatened to equal my waistline but I was quickly restored to normal proportions (that is, normal for me) by finding that the "fame" (?) of Parkview is entirely due to having among its ranks a chap by the name of "Van" - unfortunately the meeting started in a remarkable proximity to the appointed time which would shame any Johannesburg Crew and I was unable to get further towards solving the mystery of the reason for Van's notoriety in this town than ascertaining that a little girl in a cafe opposite the Astra Theatre here was inextricably involved in the story in some way.

Turning my attention to the Rover Meeting, I was just in time to learn, by hard experience, of a quaint old Central Crew custom whereby when a guileless visitor appears on the horizon some member of the Crew has invariably been unavoidably detained and the unsuspecting visitor is called upon to give a talk to fill the vacant place in the programme caused by the delinquent - Thus fell I! and instead of getting a chance to delve deeper into the "Van" mystery I had to make a speech about Rovering in the Transvaal - It's alright. Mr. Editor - "Veld Trails" can still be published for I painted a glowing picture of countless Rovers who never allow girls to interfere with Crew activities, Rovers whose application to assigned duties will go down in history, Rovers who regularly pay their Crew Subs and subscribe generously to "Veld Trails". Rovers who hike and camp in blazing sun or blizzards, and even more on those lines, whilst my audience waited with bated breaths for the catch that was not disclosed. How's that for provincial loyalty on my part?

After this talk everyone was very, very dry so we had tea and between mouthfuls I persevered with my self assigned task of getting to the bottom of this business of Van and the handsome waitress but just when I'd buttonholed a reliable eyewitness of the whole episode the meeting was resumed and in 30 minutes I learned from a talk by "Guns" more about navigation lights and signals carried by boats than I ever knew in the rest of my life and that, in spite of the fact that my mind was still actively engaged on the big cafe mystery story - Again, with commendable regard to even a Rovers need for sleep, the meeting closed at the appointed hour and I was free to pursue my investigations into Vans peregrinations in to the Cafe business but Fate was against me for my escort was in a hurry and rather than walk (that's what 8 years of Rovering have done to me). I decided to leave the mystery over till my next visit to this city.

It was a splendid meeting and next time anyone says they're getting too old for Rovering I shall refer them to this Port Elizabeth Crew where the absence of hair is only equalled by a splendid spirit of co-operative comradeship and a determination to get things done.

In spite of a night badly disturbed by nightmares of pretty waitresses, distress signals on ships and Van running innumerable cafes, I feel today that I shall leave Port Elizabeth with high hopes for the future of Rovering in this city with a bunch of chaps like the Central Crew to show the way.

Cheerio.

PAUL.

2nd Turffontein (St. John's)

We have to thank Good Companions for an enjoyable evening spent at their den a few weeks back. Much as we would like to, we will be unable to return the visit until our crew is more settled and we have better facilities for entertaining visitors.

Our first monthly social since the dance was quite a success. However, we would like to see more faces from other crews at these functions.

Our camp has been set for November 11th and 12th. Provided that the weather holds we are sure of a good turnout but are equally certain that the slightest sign of rain will find most of our members at home mumbling about colds and rheumatism because they seem to detest H₂O in its most necessary form.

At present we are filled with regret that as R.L. "Inch" Reed is going on holiday for some weeks he will be beyond our control and we fear greatly for his safety. We close wishing him a good holiday and good scouting.

1st Norwood.

In spite of poor attendances at meetings due to intensive swatting by the 'learned' members of the Crew we are still going strong and doing nicely, thank you.

The Annual General Meeting was held on Friday 13th, but in spite of the date everything went off smoothly. The camp-fire items put on by the Rovers caused many laughs and false notes.

That's all for the time being so cheerio.

Scribe: A.D. DOWIE,
49, Scholtz Avenue,
NORWOOD.

1st Primrose - GERMISTON

1st Primrose Rover Crew are holding a dance in aid of the Mayor's £1,000,000 Food Fund and Crew Funds, at the Alexander Hotel, Germiston, on 10th November 1939. Tickets are 7/6 double, 5/- single, obtainable at Scout Headquarters.

The Crew wish to arrange cricket matches with other Crews. Get in touch with
H. MYRTON,
2 Marigold Road,
Primrose.....GERMISTON.

The following have volunteered and have been accepted for service with the South African Permanent Forces.

D.R. THOMPSON
N. TONER
J. ARMSTRONG
C.L. COOK

S.A.A.F. EAST LONDON "WITS" CREW.
T.H.A. ST. PAT'S CREW
S.A.A.F. PARKVIEW CREW
T.H.A. VELD TRAILS AND NORWOOD CREW.

PROGRAMME FOR TRANSVAAL ROVER INDABA

VAN RYN ESTATES, BENONI, NOVEMBER 18th and 19th.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18th

3 p.m. Indaba Opens
4.30 - 5.30 Wide Game
5.30 p.m. Official opening of Indaba
5.45 - 8p.m. Preparing and consuming dinner
8 p.m. Camp Fire.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19th

9 a.m. Scouts own
9.30 - 10.30 Indaba Session
10.30 - 12 noon Activity (Tea at 11 a.m.)
12 noon - 1p.m. Talk
1 p.m. - 2.30 Lunch
2.30 - 3.30p.m. Indaba Session
3.30 - 4.30 Activity
5 p.m. Indaba Closes

"Don't laugh. We had a helluva time filling the other 10 pages"